

Public comment to the City of Gladstone on Re-opening Meldrum Bar Park

As we have all learned, the ability to get outside for exercise and enjoyment of park spaces has been all too evident during our latest period of staying at home. Meldrum Bar Park is the largest park in our city and an important part of our ability to get outside and enjoy our greenspaces.

The key parts of the park that are highly desirable to re-open access are:

1. Community Garden. It's a critical time for planting and utilizing garden spaces needed for family food sources.
2. Large open field area for many activities that can still be used during social distancing
3. The boat ramp at Meldrum Bar: It's still prime spring chinook season and the start of shad season and with the ramp at Meldrum open, it would relieve crowding at Sportcraft and Milwaukie ramps that are creating challenges for social distancing while launching. Meldrum is also one of the easiest places for launching non-motorized craft such as kayaks and SUP's.
4. Beach fishing at Meldrum and Dahl beach. This is one of the few areas where older and disabled anglers can access the river for salmon, steelhead and shad fishing.
5. RC Track near the boat ramp.

Restrooms are a critical part of re-opening. We know what happens when the park is open but the restrooms are closed. The Governor's re-opening checklist for outdoor recreation clearly outlines what is needed for opening restrooms in parks. The City would have to commit to cleaning the restrooms near the field and the boat ramp 2 times a day. Hopefully the work schedules can be adjusted to meet this goal. Outdoor recreation re-open requirements: <https://www.oregonlive.com/travel/2020/05/reopening-oregon-read-phase-1-guidelines-for-outdoor-recreation-areas-during-coronavirus-pandemic.html>

Another issue at Meldrum is a lot of illegal parking near the boat ramp on the river bank. While there is room for some vehicle parking some try to squeeze in where there isn't room. Initially after opening, law enforcement would have to warn and eventually ticket offenders that try to park where there isn't room. Additionally, there is a continual problem of people trying to park on the spit at meldrum bar. In the spring, water levels change quickly and people that are unaware often get stranded there, creating an emergency rescue situation. My suggestion is that the access to the spit be blocked to prevent anyone from driving there. As we know, signs will be ignored when it's inconvenient.

Thank you for accepting my comments to the City Council Meeting on May 12, 2020.

Respectfully
Terry Turner
405 High Court
Gladstone, OR

Gladstone Pickleball Club

SOFT Reopening Max Patterson Park

- **Limit number of players to 22 per session**
 - This will allow people 4 per open court with no more than 6 waiting to play. That will leave enough space for adequate social distancing.
 - This number of players allows for 560 sq/ft per person
- **Limit use to 4 outside corner courts**
 - This will allow for social distancing during play
- **Provide several sessions during the day**
- **Open to Gladstone Pickleball Club Members Only at this time**
- **No Drop ins (unscheduled players showing up)**
- **Use Playtime Scheduler to organize play**
 - This will limit the number of players per session.
 - Limit players to current members
- **Maintain social distancing and cleaning guidelines**
 - No sharing of paddles
 - Benches will be provided and marked for social distancing guidelines
 - No food/drink sharing
 - Clean the sitting areas between each session
 - Put up social distancing reminder signs
 - Remind players bathrooms will remained closed
- **Sign up and contact #'s for all participants**
- **Hand sanitizer on hand**
- **Players under the weather or with a cough will be asked to not attend.**
- **When sessions are completed the courts can be locked up again if City requires it.**

***We are planning a can food drive when reopen to donate to the Gladstone Food Pantry.**

May 12th 2020

I am asking that the council reopens the parks. I know the “official” word is the parks aren’t closed but we all know that isn’t necessarily true. Parks are essential and allowed under the governors executive order. (Link attached) page 7 item 18 through 22. Emphasis on line 22. In this section pertaining to outdoor recreation areas it does not state we must close parks or limit access other than for the social distancing. At about 100 acres and around one mile of river access social distancing is maintainable. In fact the park could accommodate over 7,000 people maintaining a six foot distance. Part of the issue cited for the park closure I believe would not have happened if the restrooms were open. As stated in this section restrooms were not to be closed but must have trashcans, soap and water, or sanitizer.

Our parks, gardening, and fishing are essential as defined by the State of Oregon (link attached)

“Essential consumer goods or services

- "Essential consumer goods or services" means goods or services that:
 - (a) Are or may be bought or acquired primarily for personal, family or household purposes, including but not limited to residential construction materials or labor, shelter for payment such as a hotel room, food, water or petroleum products such as gasoline or diesel fuel; **and**
 - (b) Are necessary for the health, safety or welfare of consumers.”

While I understand the reasons behind the closure I don’t think it is fair to penalize the vast majority of law abiding citizens for the actions of a few. Also the issues with people parking on the bar at Meldrum are not new. Most people who enjoy our parks are there with those they live with. They have always maintained some distance even before this viral treat.

Those using the boat ramp are there to recreate while gathering food for themselves or their families. This is allowed under the order. Closing this popular spot has not helped promote social distancing, it has had the opposite effect. Now we see anglers using the

sports craft marina in Oregon City and trucks and trailers lined up the road and across the street in the shopping center. I ask that the boat ramp and access is reopened so that people may gather food while maintaining proper social distance from each other.

The community gardens are located in the park. It's time to plant and for some crops to harvest. This is how many of us grow our own fresh organic produce and a source of the same for local food banks and neighbors. This is an essential activity and also allowed in the executive order. While the access remains blocked many gardeners have not been able to get to their gardens. Some who have gardened for years have been forced to give up their plots they've spent years to build and cultivate. The gardens are inside a gated area the public is not allowed into without a garden member inviting them in. Social distancing here is also something that was practiced long before any viral threat. Many members are disabled or older and cannot make the hike dragging plants and tools needed for acquiring food grown by their own hands. Gardening is also the only way some of them get exercise. To deny access to them isn't in anyone's best interest and goes against the executive order from the governor.

Violation of the American's with Disabilities Act. According to the CDC 1 in 4 American's is living with a disability. The barricades closing off access to the open park send a mixed message. To those with disabilities these roadblocks are a large CLOSED sign. Some disabled people who enjoy our parks daily never even get out of their vehicles. Some like to watch the river flow by or to just take in the peaceful scenery. During our current stressful times this has never been more important. Closing these roads discriminates against these people and violates the ADA act 1990 title III, reasonable accommodations are willfully and knowingly being denied.

I ask the council step up and right this wrong. I ask that politics be set aside. This is for the betterment of our community in this time of need. We can bicker and snipe at each other at a later time, right now let's all focus on getting through this threat. I believe most people will follow the rules and those who don't should be asked to either follow them or to leave if they refuse.

For transparency I do not fish in the rivers but I do garden. I have been able to access the garden and have been helping others with rototilling. Keeping the roadblocks up will not stop me from continuing to do so. This is not about me but others who are suffering due to this action.

Thank You

Bill Osburn

Gladstone resident

Governors Executive Order:

https://govsite-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/jkAULYKcSh6DoDF8wBM0_EO%2020-12.pdf

Definition of Essential Goods:

https://www.oregonlaws.org/glossary/definition/essential_consumer_goods_or_service

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